

FOIA Section 36 and EIR Regulation 12 (4)(e) Public Interest Test

<i>Factors for disclosure</i>	<i>Factors for withholding</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a public interest in seeing what the practical driving test involves • Candidates will have more of an awareness of what is expected from them on test • By disclosing the routes used at Crewe, instructors can avoid using these at times when tests are conducted • Allowing instructors on test could, over a period of time, impact the confidential aspect of the Crewe test routes, as instructors may, themselves, become familiar with the routes. Routes may therefore become known to instructors and candidates over time anyway • Instructor may insist on sitting in on tests against the candidates wishes so that they can become more familiar with the routes used 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The ability to multi-task is essential if a new driver is going to be able to manage route and traffic conditions whilst handling distractions which will arise, for example, when navigating an unfamiliar route or carrying passengers. ‘Independent driving’ on routes that are not communicated to candidates in advance of the test is therefore designed to give learner drivers the opportunity to be responsible for decision making, scanning for information, and other sub tasks while driving, rather than relying on guidance from their instructor or frequent direction from the examiner. The introduction of independent driving into the driving test aims to ensure that learner drivers are taught how to make their own decisions whilst interacting with other road users in different types of road and traffic conditions. This will increase newly qualified drivers all round abilities in ‘real driving’ and help to reduce the number of collisions new drivers are involved in (currently 1 in 5), and thus withholding the test routes used at Crewe ought to lead to safer roads and fewer accidents. • Publication of test routes used at Crewe would lead to some candidates only learning and being taught specific routes to being able to pass their test rather than the all round knowledge, skills and attitudes required to be a safe and responsible driver. • If routes were published it would, in some cases, result in unprepared and inexperienced drivers taking to the road without the relevant skills, knowledge and understanding. • Publication of routes used at Crewe could lead to some driving instructors making heavy use of the test routes when teaching their pupils, leading to an increase in traffic on those routes and higher noise and emission levels which impacts on residents of those areas. • Whilst there is a risk that routes may become known to instructors over time despite not being published, DSA regularly reviews and refreshes test routes. Publication of test routes would reduce the benefit of refreshing the routes.
<i>Reasons why public interest favours withholding information</i>	
<p>In this instance, the public interest in withholding the information requested outweighs the public interest in its release. Release of the test routes used at Crewe would specifically negate the benefits offered by the independent driving element of testing and may also mean that many new drivers fail to develop the all-round knowledge, skills and understanding required to be a safe and responsible driver. DSA will therefore struggle to contribute to the government’s objective of improving road safety and reducing the number of road users killed or seriously injured on our roads.</p>	

